

Taos County Democratic Party Platform
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Principles

Diversity

We affirm that:

- Historic cultures and traditions should be respected;
- This country and this region have had a difficult and violent past, and this history should not be ignored;
- All residents of Taos County and tribal nations should be included in decision making;
- Human, cultural, and biological diversity should be celebrated;
- The rights and dignity of documented and undocumented immigrants should be respected.

Government, Voting Rights & Ethics

We affirm that:

- Local government should focus on local issues and the people elected need to be responsive to the constituents;
- Elected officials should respect the heritage of the area and serve all areas of the county and all constituents equitably;
- Transparency, citizen input and participation are vital to healthy governance;
- Community and environmental well-being should prevail over special interests in planning decisions.
- Voter access and participation are essential to a democracy.
- Cooperation between County and Town Governments is essential.

Planning and Economic Development

We affirm that:

- A sustainable local economy requires:
 - diversification of industry;
 - improvement in the standard of living for the full-time resident population;
 - low cost or free, high quality healthcare, day care, job training and transportation;
 - job creation for local workforce;
 - access to affordable housing; and
 - reasonable limitations on growth.
- Regenerative farming practices and the localization of food resources is necessary for food security and reduction of the carbon footprint;
- To sustain local multi-generational communities, our youth need opportunities and incentives to stay and thrive here, and our elders need resources to age in place;
- All workers deserve the right to collective bargaining.

Environment, Agriculture and Water

We affirm that:

- All people deserve to live in a healthy environment;
- The practice of “Reduce, Reuse and Recycle” is a priority;
- Natural resources must be protected and preserved, especially water sources and acequias;
- Corporations, businesses, government and residents are responsible for proper disposal of the waste they generate;
- Environmentally damaging chemicals should not be used.

Healthcare, Education and Childcare

We affirm that:

- A healthy democracy depends on equal access to a quality education, which requires equitable funding for all students;
- High quality affordable childcare is essential for working parents;
- All people deserve equal access to affordable high quality local healthcare;
- Treatment of Substance Use Disorder and mental illness is a community priority.

Civil Rights and Criminal Justice

We affirm that:

- All people deserve to be free from civil and domestic violence;
- Law enforcement is most effective at keeping our communities safe when there are trusting and fair relationships among the entire community and law enforcement;
- Alternative forms of justice, such as Mediation and Restorative Justice programs, should be encouraged;
- The police and the military serve different functions and the militarization of our police force is inappropriate and unacceptable.

Policy

Government, Voting Rights & Ethics

We want elected and appointed officials to commit to:

- Public funding for broadening voter outreach by disseminating early and consistent information about voting and election processes and procedures, locations and dates for voting;
- Cooperating with schools to encourage civic education and youth participation;
- Choosing the most inclusive and least restrictive opportunities available for voting regulations.

Planning and Economic Development

We want elected and appointed officials to commit to:

- Implementing the goals and objectives detailed in the Town of Taos “(Re)vision 2020 Affordable Housing Element” (2012) and their “Affordable Housing Plan” (2020), including:
 - Continuing to sponsor Low-Income Housing Tax Credit projects;
 - Establishing a land trust to develop new starter homes, potentially using town-owned land, or privately-owned land that can receive tax credit through the New Mexico Affordable Housing Tax Credit Act;

- Developing moderately-priced rentals for our workforce, including teachers, using employer-assisted housing strategies and land trust development;
- Implementing strategies to further enable the use of existing Section 8 vouchers;
- Continuing to place limits on the number of non-owner-occupied vacation rentals;
- Implementing a real estate transfer tax on high-priced sales;
- Adopting inclusionary zoning to require affordable units in all new development projects;
- Expanding the use of current rehabilitation and weatherization programs for housing stock and piloting new funding opportunities for same;
- Supporting the efforts of the State of Homelessness in Taos Collaborative to provide shelter and permanent housing for people experiencing homelessness;
- Increasing the local minimum wage to \$15/hour to provide a living wage.
- Supporting workers’ rights, including reaffirming the Democratic Party’s historic support of labor rights, collective bargaining and unionization;
- Expanding investment in public transportation, safe biking routes, and walking paths;
- Supporting school-district funding for teacher housing;
- Supporting revisions to any county code that causes eviction, displacement or housing insecurity;
- Amending local cannabis ordinances to match state standards;
- Developing and sustaining farmer's markets, community kitchens, community gardens and seed exchanges for local food producers.

Environment, Agriculture and Water

We want elected and appointed officials to commit to:

- Supporting legislation requiring the recording and disclosure of water rights and acequia association fees in real estate transactions;
- Retrofitting all government buildings to align with environmentally sound practices, including insulation standards for climate change, water use and efficient utilities;
- Purchasing EV government vehicles and creating more charging stations in Taos County;
- Enforcing the dark skies ordinances, and establishing a fund to retrofit public lighting;
- Ensuring that local governments avoid using any materials that contain PFOS, PFAS or other “forever” chemicals;
- Maintaining recycling centers as a necessary public service;
- Establishing a receiving station for household hazardous waste;
- Protecting our limited natural resources by requiring planning for further development to be consistent with conclusions made by environmental impact studies;
- Developing and implementing a fully integrated renewable energy plan to accomplish the transition to 100% renewable energy by 2030.

Healthcare, Education and Childcare

We want elected and appointed officials to commit to:

- Increasing funding for child care and early education programs.
- Promoting fairness and efficiency in school districts by consolidating resources;
- Encouraging collective bargaining by school employees, regardless of employer;
- Expanding behavioral health services, including the development of a comprehensive Psychiatric Emergency Services facility located within our community;
- Expanding access to evidence-based programs, proven treatment modalities and low barrier services for substance use disorders;
- Continuing support for our regional hospital and increasing funding for the Health Care Assistance Program and the Taos County Indigent Fund;
- Promoting transparency in the public funding of local medical infrastructure;
- Increasing funding for ambulance, EMT and emergency services;
- Supporting funding for elder-assistance programs such as TENT and Los Ancianos.

Civil Rights and Criminal Justice

We want elected and appointed officials to commit to:

- Reducing local incarceration rates by making use of diversionary programs such as Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion, Restorative Justice Programs, Treatment and Mental Health Courts, and Housing First models of intervention;
- A Re-entry Program to serve adjudicated persons in Taos County by offering a program of wrap-around services to provide a positive impact on their lives.

We want Taos County law enforcement, including sheriff and district attorney, to build and maintain trust by:

- Adhering to best practices for body camera use, minimizing use of force (including pursuits and crowd control), supporting the use of de-escalation techniques, enforcing state laws that protect victims, and providing adequate training on the above;
- Investigating and pursuing sanctions, including criminal charges, against officers who violate the law;
- Refraining from hiring officers who have committed such violations in other districts;
- Committing to transparency when officers are accused of misconduct and providing updates on the status of any investigations, acquittals, convictions and/or pre-prosecution diversions;
- Opposing cooperation with ICE and "court traps" to detain people;
- Supporting the creation of a community oversight board for local law enforcement agencies.